

## IN MORRO CASTLE.

Two Hundred and Twelve Men Confined in Two Cells.

SEVERAL AMERICAN CITIZENS.

One British Subject—One Frenchman—Horror of the Imprisonment—Hopelessness of the Situation of the Cuban Victims.

HABANA, April 4, via TAMPA, FLA., April 6.—Two hundred and twelve men are confined in two cells of Morro Castle. They are political prisoners or suspects awaiting trial. Some have been there a week, some a month, some a year. Two are American citizens, one a year, born in Spain, and not long enough in this country to dream of rebelling against the government. There are men bowed in years, young men, merchants, professional men, clerks, and farm laborers, all gathered in and thrown together with little or no evidence of having aided or taken part in the insurrection.

In the Cuban fortress, close by, and in prisons all over the island, are other unfortunate—2,300, perhaps 4,000 altogether, for no man may know how many people Spain has behind the bars at this time in Cuba. But of these 212 are in the Morro.

In times of war, foreigners, newspaper correspondents, and tourists are supposed to be shut out of Spanish prisons, but relatives and friends are admitted to Morro Castle on Sundays and Wednesdays. On one of these days recently a visitor crossed the row-boat ferry from Habana to the landing near the Morro, and the Cuban and Morro walked up the pebble-paved approach to the latter, and passed within the old battlements. Spanish soldiers, to the number of two hundred, lounged around the entrance and court-yard. About half of them were on duty. In the centre of the court some fifty or sixty visitors were grouped in front of the two principal cells. Guards kept an open space ten feet wide between the visitors and the barred doors and windows of the cells. Bundles of clothing and food were passed to the prisoners. Conversations between those behind the bars and those without had to be carried on in a loud voice. Wives spoke encouragement to husbands, and mothers to sons, and told of efforts being made to obtain release. Each cell is about 20 feet wide and nearly 100 feet deep. They are of stone, arched above, and are more like subterranean tunnels than rooms for human beings. The only openings are at the ends. They are in the lower part of a building within the outer walls, and have the appearance of being intended for storing supplies. They are damp and dirty, and are said to be infested with vermin. Nothing in the shape of chairs, benches, or beds, is provided. There are, however, hooks for fifty hammocks in each room. Friends of the prisoners supply the hammocks, but as there are 105 men in one room, and 104 in the other, over half the number are compelled to sleep on the stone floor. Water is furnished twice a day in square cans, which contain a small quantity of oil. Regular army rations are served. The sanitary arrangements are vile. Many men are taken from these cells to the hospitals, before the slow-moving authorities see fit to try their cases or admit that they have no case.

INDIVIDUAL CASES.

One of the prisoners is Lopez Coloma, who left Matanzas in the early days of rebellion. He Juan Guillermo Gomez, who in Ceuta, a prison, Coloma, who left himself when Captain-General Calleja issued his proclamation granting amnesty to all insurgents who surrendered. He has been in prison over a year, neither being denied nor given a trial, and stands a good chance of dying in prison.

Another of the prisoners is Ladislao Quintana, an American citizen, one of the peaceful residents of Guantamo, who was taken prisoner in his own house, and shot in the army after capture. He never took part in the insurrection. His wife filed a statement of his case with the American Consul six weeks ago.

Another prisoner is Manuel Francisco Agüero. He claims to be an American citizen, and though he was arrested in January, 1895, the American Consul said he had never heard of the case until I laid it before him. Agüero is a general agent or general manager of a travelling circus, is nearly 60 years of age, has only one arm, and there are only three fingers on his remaining hand. He spent a fair amount of money in visiting the United States last year to obtain features for his circus, and lived there at one time five years, when he took out citizenship papers. He says he has taken no part in the present war, and was arrested in Guantamo, where he was taken back from Sagua, as Mr. Pileira, acting Vice-Consul at Sagua, during the absence of the Consul, told him. Agüero says he cannot get his papers back from Sagua, as Mr. Pileira, Consul-General, has no longer there. Consul-General Williams has agreed to write to Sagua to learn if Agüero is registered there as an American citizen.

There is a British subject in the Morro who has been there about four months, but as he is informed that steps have been taken which have demonstrated his innocence, and will result in his being made a free man, he does not want his name mentioned.

Nearly all of the 212 are white. One is a smooth-cheeked Spanish lad of 16, who was clerk in a store in a small town in the interior of Habana province. He lost his position, and was walking along the highway to Habana when arrested, and charged with being a rebel.

In the case of the Morro are other political prisoners, admitted in 1895, and in Cuba, Sancti Spiriti, the only American who has had a trial, is confined. His case has been appealed, as the evidence did not warrant conviction. Cepero, another American, who has been in the Morro two months, is now in the Presidio prison, Habana, and will be taken to Santa Clara for trial. The two Somellans, father and son, have been released, after about six weeks in prison, there being no evidence against them. They are American citizens, and are well known in the tobacco trade.

YOUNG DYER.

The American in Guantamo jail, about whom the Senate has questioned the State Department, was arrested and identified by the Spanish officials as the rebel leader, "El Ingles," the little Englishman—but as the latter is still fighting at the head of an insurgent column, Dyer is now said to be another incident in his way to join the rebels, and the claim is made that a rifle was found near the spot where he had no arms, and did not intend joining the rebels.

One other American citizen in jail is Rodriguez, who was arrested on board an American steamer Olivette five weeks ago. He is at the Morro.

There is one Frenchman—Honore Laine—in either the Morro or the Canabana. He was arrested at a hotel in Habana two months ago, and has never been given a hearing.

Aside from those whom I have named, the political prisoners are Cubans, almost without exception. They are not in any sense prisoners of war. They are peaceable citizens, dragged out of their homes, away from families dependent upon them for support, and sent to the Morro. If there is any real evidence against them they are deported to the Spanish penal colony, at Ceuta, Africa. Those remaining at the Morro are men who have not rebelled against Spain, but whom Spain suspects of doing so. Were it not for the hope of release that is ever present in their breasts, their fate—that of slow death in Morro Castle—might be considered worse than that

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